

U.S. Prisoner in China May Be Freed--Mother

HONG KONG (UPI)—

An American serving a life term in a Chinese prison as a spy may be released soon, his mother said Monday.

Mrs. Mary Downey, 70, a former school teacher from New Britain, Conn., made the statement after a series of visits with her son, John, 42, in his Peking prison.

Downey and another American, Richard C. Fecteau, 43, of Lynn, Mass., both civilian employees of the Army, disappeared on a "regularly scheduled flight from Korea to Japan on Nov. 29, 1952," according to the U.S. State Department.

They were captured by the Chinese and sentenced as spies by a military tribunal in 1954. Downey was sentenced to life in prison and Fecteau was sentenced to 20 years.

Mrs. Downey, who first visited her son a dozen years ago, was accompa-

nied on the recent trip by another son, William, and his wife.

During their two-week stay, she said, they visited Downey eight times and were allowed to stay two hours each time.

"At the end of our visit Jack told us that he had been informed by the prison authorities his case was being reviewed to determine what their policy of leniency might be—he might be released rather than serve out his sentence.

"The prison officials told Jack that an important factor in deciding to apply leniency was the prisoner's behavior while in prison and that they consider that his behavior had been good," she said.

"I am hoping with all my heart that my prayers for Jack's release will soon be answered," she said.

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